

LACDMH HOSTS SIXTH ANNUAL HOUSING INSTITUTE

By Karen Zarsadiaz-Ige, Public Information Officer II



The Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (LACDMH) hosted the sixth annual Housing Institute, entitled *Moving Forward Together; Finding Collaborative Solutions in Permanent Supportive Housing*. The two-day event took place on Wednesday, June 12th and Thursday, June 13th at the California Endowment in downtown Los Angeles. More than 300 participants took part in this year's Housing Institute.

The Housing Institute allows participants to learn more about how to finance housing communities, and partner with housing developers, property management, supportive services and mental health providers. The goal of the Housing Institute is to provide private companies and public agencies with information on how to build permanent supportive housing for the homeless and mentally ill.



"Why this is important now is because this is a whole new world for developers," said Ramon Mendez, Director of Solutions for Enterprise – Community Partners, Inc. "The Institute is great for capacity building and forming new networks."

"It's a great opportunity to meet colleagues and peers from different sectors like service providers and developers," explained Brian D'Andrea, President of the Century Villages at Cabrillo. "We're all here and part of a big cause – trying to solve homelessness. This is an opportunity to rub elbows, and to talk to each other and see how others are handling challenges that we face and vice versa."



This year, LACDMH partnered with the Corporation for Supportive Housing (CSH), Enterprise, Walton Construction Services, Chase Bank, Meta Housing Corporation, Union Bank, Wells Fargo, Nu-Way Mattresses Corp., Egan Simon Architecture, John Stewart Company, PATH Ventures, A Community of Friends,

Affordable Living for the Aging, Shelter Partnership, Inc., the Association of Community Human Service Agencies (ACHSA), Christine Ferguson, M.A. Program Design & Implementation Specialist, and Jovenes, Inc. With everyone's help and sponsorships, they provided information and resources on housing for populations that need it the most.

Attendees were offered dozens of workshops during the two days, including how to finance supportive housing, methods for documenting and claiming housing services, information on fair housing laws, resources for homeless individuals and families, integrating housing and services for veterans, and support and housing for older adults who are homeless.



"I've gone for the past three years to the Housing Institute," stated Ishimine Caldwell, Manager of Support Services for the Coalition for Responsible Community Development (CRCD). "You always get information, best practices and ways to work with the homeless and chronically homeless individuals. It's helpful to take this information back (to our staff and partners) so we can develop best practices and know how to handle different situations."

On the first day of the Housing Institute, Wednesday, June 12th, LACDMH Chief Deputy Director Robin Kay, Ph.D., welcomed participants to the Housing Institute. She was followed by the keynote addresses from Michael Arnold, Executive Director of the Los Angeles Homeless Service Authority, and Christine

Marge, M.S.W., Director of Housing Stability for the United Way of Greater Los Angeles.



On the second day of the event, Thursday, June 13th, LACDMH Director Marvin Southard, D.S.W., gave the opening remarks which were then followed by a plenary session, *My Journey – From Homelessness to Now*, moderated by Ruth Schwartz.

